

Mary Lou Terrien

From: Brian Fitzpatrick <irishfitz1981@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 11:20 AM
To: Mary Lou Terrien
Subject: Save Our Historic Homes

Hello Mary Lou Terrien,

I would like to voice my concerns against HB 5232.

I currently live in the historic neighborhood of Heritage Hill.

I am a college educated individual that works for an insurance company that serves the entire nation. I can get a job anywhere in the United States. I choose to live in Grand Rapids because of Heritage Hill. The character of the homes, the uniqueness of the neighborhood, and the appreciation of history that this community has keeps me in Michigan. The historical preservation laws that currently exist help to protect this neighborhood, and I do not want to see this neighborhood lost to modern development.

I understand the thoughts behind these new bills. Why not give the homeowners some freedom or wiggle room, so they can make repairs that will not be outrageously expensive. I truly appreciate that concern. But, in my humble opinion, the risk is not worth the reward. I assume that you are familiar with Heritage Hill, and I hope you have taken the time to walk the many streets and enjoy the beauty. If you have, you will see what was lost before the preservation laws took effect. I encourage you to look at 47 Lafayette Ave NE, and compare it to the homes next to this building. I encourage you to look at 321 Fountain St NE, and compare it to the home next door. Look at 255 Washington St. Look at the current Wood TV8 building, and compare it to the homes across the street.

All we have to do is look at what the city did in the past to know what would happen to this neighborhood in the future. Limiting the laws that protect this neighborhood would, over time, break apart this neighborhood, just as it was doing during the urban renewal movement of the 1970s. Once these homes are torn down, there is no way to ever get them back.

Heritage Hill sits in a prime location. Surely you must be aware of its proximity to downtown, hospitals, and schools. If we limit or weaken the protection of this neighborhood, how long would it truly stand up to development? How long would it be before Spectrum health buys up homes on Lafayette St? Or Grand Valley? Or Mercy Health? Or any of the other developers building along Michigan Street? The homes would fall one by one, and a generation later, the neighborhood would be completely different. We cannot take this risk!

Finally, I live in a fabulous home on Lafayette Ave. It is a large Tudor revival built in 1900 by Civil War General George Briggs. It has fantastic wood floors, tall ceilings, massive windows, and beautiful crown molding. I pay almost \$1000 dollars a month for my 1 bedroom apartment in this house, when there are many neighborhoods that offer much cheaper housing. I am drawn to the character of this home and the neighborhood. And so are many others like me. I was on a waiting list for an apartment list this for 14 months. The demand is so great to live in this neighborhood! Why jeopardize such a good thing? Surely there are more pressing issues in this great city and state of ours, than to challenge the statue of a neighborhood where people wait over a year just to rent a one bedroom apartment. Surely the many neighborhoods of Grand Rapids overcome with drugs, crime, and poverty, with abandoned homes and empty storefronts, require more attention than Heritage Hill?

If the city of Grand Rapids would have had their way, my house that I live in would have been torn down. They actually wanted to tear down every house between Lyon and Fountain, all the way from downtown to Union Ave. Luckily, laws were passed and the neighborhood was saved. Can you imagine what a loss this would have been?

My letter has become long winded, but this is an issue that I am truly passionate about. I encourage you to go to the heritage hill website, and learn about what was almost lost. <http://www.heritagehillweb.org/>

I appreciate your time. If there is anyone else I should pass this email on to that would help my cause, please let me know.

I wish you all the best and hope you are able to help preserve this neighborhood.